



EBT NEWS

County of Los Angeles
Department of Public
Social Services

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EBT IS COMING



What is EBT?

EBT is an electronic issuance process for public benefits. Later this summer in Los Angeles County, paper Food Stamp coupons will be replaced with a debit card (like an ATM card) that can be used at grocery stores by participants to purchase food items (similar to how ATM cards are used for purchases). EBT for Food Stamps is mandated by federal and State law.

At county option, EBT can also be used to issue cash. Issuing cash through EBT would be very different from the current paper check process. Participants currently pick up their checks at food stamp outlets; they can cash them there or take them elsewhere to cash. With EBT, they won't get a paper check. They'll use the same debit card that they have for food stamps. They can swipe it at participating ATMs or merchants to obtain cash. However, there can be a cost (or surcharge) to participants each time they swipe their card. Our County Board of Supervisors will decide in June whether to switch to EBT or use some other method to issue cash. We will keep you informed on this issue in future updates!



What does Los Angeles County Think About EBT?

DPSS conducted 55 EBT forums in January and early February, informing participants about EBT and getting their input. More than 9000 participants attended and over 7000 completed survey forms. Of these:

- 68% want to receive cash via EBT
 - 24% do not
 - 8% are undecided
- 64% think there will be enough ATMs and merchants where they can obtain their cash
 - 24% do not
 - 12% are undecided

Major Milestones

- ✓ June 2003 -- LA County Board of Supervisors to decide whether to issue cash using EBT or use some other method
- ✓ Summer 2003 - EBT pilot program to roll out in Metro East and South Central districts
- ✓ February 2004 -- Countywide implementation of EBT begins (1/2 of districts roll out in February, other half in March)

NEW BENEFITS CARD

